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CS 601 Christian Ethics

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NOTE: The first assignment is due 18 SEPT – in SPO or in professor's office by 12 noon; only exceptions: ExL students may send electronically by 9:00 am on same day (18 SEPT).

This is BEFORE the first class session.

CS 601: Christian Ethics

***Asbury Theological Seminary
Fall 2006***

Meeting Dates: September 21 - 23

Meeting Time: Thursday 4:00 – 9:00; Friday & Saturday 8:00 – 5:00

Meeting Location: TBA

Professor: James Thobaben, Ph.D.

Office Location: AD 304-b

**Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 1:30 – 4:00 & by appointment
(by appointment during J-Term & summer terms)**

Purpose:

To prepare students for ministry by training them to analyze and address the moral life from a Christian perspective. To enable ministers to equip their congregations for understanding moral responsibility and for practicing ministry with integrity. To assist in training ministers who will draw all persons, including those who are excluded by society, into the care and guidance of the community of faith under the Lordship of Christ. To assist in the training of ministers who will exemplify the Gospel-mandated holy life.

Objectives:

Students will be able:

- To provide a biblical basis for the moral life.
- To describe various historical and contemporary Christian interpretations of social and personal moral issues.
- To use the basic vocabulary of ethical analysis.
- To use basic tools of social analysis.
- To explain the Wesleyan emphasis on the various dimensions of holiness, specifically the expectation for personal integrity, moral concern, and social responsibility.
- To recognize and explain at a basic level: the needs, contexts, and insights of various cultural groups and marginalized communities in society and in the church (these may include, but are not limited to, particularity arising from ethnic, gender, class, and geographic locations).
- To explain how responses to moral problems and moral integrity shape congregational life.

Texts: Boulton, Wayne G., Thomas D.Kennedy, and Allen Verhey, eds., *From Christ to the World: Introductory Readings in Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

Dayton, Donald W., *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988).

Hollinger, Dennis, *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002).

Miles, Rebekah L., *The Pastor as Moral Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

Selected readings on web or in packet sold through ATS Bookstore. This means you may have to go to the Web, on your own, and find the resource. The packet includes Heitzenrater, Hays, VanLeeuwen & Stewart, Lysught & Volf. Three “out-of-copyright” articles are posted under the course icon.

Evaluation:

35%	Take-Home Integrative Essay	DUE 18 September at 9 am
35%	Take-Home Case Study	DUE 2 October at 9 am
30%	Final Examination (short answer, 45 minutes)	DUE 27 September at TBA
Debit: For inadequate class participation and/or late or incomplete reading.		

Grade Range: Work for CS601 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

A = (4.0) Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

B = (3.0) Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C = (2.0) Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

D = (1.0) Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives

F = (0) Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Participation: Students are required to complete all assigned readings. Reading Records will be collected on the last day of class. Failure to complete readings on time may result in a lowering of the final grade, as will poor attendance for class. Attendance will be taken. The deduction for low participation and/or late or incomplete reading of assigned material will be up to 10% against the final grade (a full letter grade reduction).

Written Work: All written work must be typed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Follow page limit requirements. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse.

All written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision.

Take-Home Integrative Essays (5 pages, typed, double-spaced) Two essay questions will require moral reflection on, and integration of, the various biblical and historical materials covered in the readings, specifically (but not limited to) Wesley and Dayton. **Due 18 September – in SPO or in professor’s office by 12 noon (exceptions: ExL students ONLY may send electronically by 9:00 am on same day).** **N OTE: This is BEFORE the first class session.**

- The first assignment is due 18 September – in SPO or in professor’s office by 12 noon; only exceptions: ExL students may send electronically by 9:00 am on same day.
- Please follow the requirements for written work included in this syllabus. The quality of writing (including spelling and grammar) is taken into account, along with the quality of the arguments and the soundness of historical ethical referencing. Only material from the class syllabus is necessary, though other works may be cited.
- The assignment is attached as the final page of this syllabus.
- Students MAY NOT discuss the assignment with anyone (an exception may be made for international students for whom English is a second language; call professor for further information)

N OTE: The first assignment is due BEFORE the first class session.

Take-Home Case Study (5 pages, typed, double-spaced) Case Study will describe an issue in ministry and will require analysis from various moral and social perspectives. **Due 2 OCT at professor's office by 12 noon (if permission is given to have paper sent electronically, it must be sent by 9 am the same day).**

Final Examination (45 minutes in class) The closed-book examination is oriented toward objective knowledge of ethical theory and historic traditions. **27 SEPT (if permission is given, exam may be taken with a proctor; it must be sent by 12 noon on 27 SEPT).**

Session 1: Moral Foundations and Sociocultural Contexts

Session 2: Moral Foundations and Sociocultural Contexts

Readings:

Assigned Scriptures (class handout)
Hollinger, pages 7-123
Hollinger, pages 125-186
Miles, pages 1-59

Session 3: Christ and Culture: The Historic Tradition

Readings:

Hollinger, pages 187-215
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
Augustine, pages 234-237
Thomas Aquinas, 109-118
Luther, 187-194
Schleitheim Confession, 285-287
Didache (web/packet)
Calvin, Civil Government (web/packet)

Session 4: Christ and Culture: Justice, Pluralism, and Public Engagement

Readings:

Hollinger, pages 216-272
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
Niebuhr, 241-247
Wolterstorff, 251-253
Kennedy, 436-442
Yoder, 91-101
Jordan, 442-445
King, 427-436
Boff and Boff, 474-482
Callahan, 270-279

Session 5: Distinctives of a Wesleyan Moral Vision

Readings:

Wesley, Sermon CXX: Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity (web or packet)
Sermon XCII: The Danger of Riches (web or packet)
Thoughts Upon Slavery (web or packet)
Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions(web or packet)

Heitzenrater, *The Imitatio Christi* and the Great Commandment (packet)

Session 6: The Church as a Moral Community

Readings:

Dayton, entire book
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
Rasmussen, 311-315

Session 7: The Church as a Moral Community: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

Readings:

Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
Ruether, 88-91
Gilligan, 172-176
Kroeger, Catherine Clark "Does Belief in Women's Equality Lead to an Acceptance of Homosexual Practice?"
www.cbeinternational.org
"Breaking the Black/White Stalemate"
<http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,url,uid&db=aph&an=311972> OR
Library Information Commons w/ Student ID using EBSCO Host.
McConnell, C. Douglas, "Confronting Racism and Prejudice in Our Kind of People" Library Information
Commons w/ Student ID using ATLA Religion Database

Session 8: The Church as a Moral Community: Friendship, Sexuality, and Homosexuality

Readings:

Miles, 103-126
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
Meilaender, 264-270
Harrison, 331-341
Hays, Homosexuality, excerpt from *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*,
379-406 (web/packet)
Pannenberg, Wolfhart "Should We Support Gay Marriage: No" Good News
Nov/Dec 2003(web/packet)
Sample, Tex "Should We Support Gay Marriage: Yes" Good News
Nov/Dec 2003 (web) <http://www.goodnewsmag.org/magazine/6NovDec/nd03pannenberg.htm>

Session 9: Marriage, Family, and Aging

Readings:

Miles, 76-102
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
Farley, 342-346
Smedes, 347-353
Lysaught, excerpt from *Growing Old in Christ*, 267-301 (web/packet)
Van Leeuwen & Stewart, Men, Marriage, & Male Parenting" (web/packet)
Wilcox, W. Bradford (interview) "Affectionate Patriarchs" Christianity Today August 2004 (web)
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/008/26.44.html>

Session 10: Work, Environment, and Worship

Readings:

Miles, 60-75
Boulton, Kennedy and Verhey:
Pope John Paul, 468-473
May, 514-524
Berry, 524-528
Volf, "Work, Human Beings & Nature" excerpt from *Work in the Spirit*, 123-156 (web / packet)

Session 11: Conclusions and Remainders

FINAL EXAM (14 JULY 2006)

CS 601: Christian Ethics
Take-Home Integrative Essays

Instructions. In developing your responses to the following two questions, please note the following:

1. Be sure to make substantial use of course readings.
2. Identify your sources in endnotes (the reference page does not count in the 5 page total).
3. Be attentive to all parts of the assignment.
4. Stay within the page and font-size guidelines: double-spaced, 12-point type, 5 pages total (excluding endnotes). You will need to be very succinct in order to answer the questions adequately while staying within page limits.

Essay #1: Imagine that you are pastoring a congregation that is located near Ft. Campbell in Kentucky. College students from the nearby university have begun attending along with the more or less permanent families associated with the military base. One of the lay sponsors of the “Young Adult Fellowship” calls you up at 11:35 pm on a Friday and says the following:

Pastor, I could have waited until tomorrow, but I thought you might want to know before the phone calls begin. Tonight one of the college students began arguing with one of the young soldiers about the morality of the Iraq war. The former called the latter a racist for referring to “the Iraqis and others like them.” The soldier responded, “My friends are dead and there are a lot of naïve people (at best, and cowards at worst) saying things they shouldn’t.” And, Pastor, I must admit, I was getting pretty angry, too, when the student began to imply that the soldier was a murderer. The student didn’t say that exactly, but came close. As you know, I work at the base and I find that difficult to swallow.

To what extent should cross and flag mix? Is it possible to be “unlocated” enough to disentangle one’s commitment to Christianity from commitment to America (or to Western cultural identity and capitalism ... or, if living elsewhere, to that land & culture). Is there a terrorist threat and does that have something to do with the Iraq war? Does potential terrorism change how/if the Church responds? Is the Iraq war or the attitude of people in the U.S. racist? How should you respond in this specific situation with these young adults? **Use Scripture and the Christian tradition (referring specifically to at least two pre-1800 figures other than Wesley) to develop a response.**

Essay #2: Social reform efforts for Wesley and for generations of Methodists afterwards were tied to a particular understanding of sanctification/holiness and the church. Respond to the following questions:

Why were the poor so important to the first generations of Methodism? How were care for the poor, personal wealth, and understandings of holiness reciprocally related for Wesley and the early Methodists? What was the role of Wesleyan small groups in the transformation of persons? (2 pages total; be sure to draw from class notes and the full range of readings on Wesley--including Dayton).